
**Economic Development,
Agriculture & Trade Committee**

HJM 4012

Brief Description: Petitioning the United States Department of Agriculture to delay plans to reopen the border to Canadian cattle and beef products.

Sponsors: Representatives Morrell, Buri, Blake, Newhouse, Campbell, Hinkle, Dunshee, Clements, Lovick, Linville, Cox, Hudgins, Grant, Woods, McCoy, Sells, Simpson, Ormsby, Haler, Kretz, Hankins, Skinner and Quall.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Prays that the U.S. Department of Agriculture delay the March 7, 2005 border reopening for Canadian cattle pending a technical investigation into the latest BSE case and Canadian enforcement of the feed ban.

Hearing Date: 2/25/05

Staff: Meg Van Schoorl (786-7105).

Background:

The December 23, 2003, detection of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) in a Canadian-origin Holstein cow in Washington became the first confirmed BSE case in the United States. BSE is a fatal neurological disorder affecting the brain and central nervous system of cattle. BSE is part of a family of transmittable spongiform encephalopathies (TSE) affecting humans and other animals. The ramifications of the finding of BSE in the Washington cow were severe. Many foreign countries closed their markets to the U.S. beef industry, and some are still closed 13 months later.

On January 4, 2005, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) proposed a rule to reopen the border to the importation of live cattle and processed beef products from Canada effective March 7, 2005. On January 11, 2005, a cow in Alberta, Canada tested positive for BSE. This was the fourth cow to be found with BSE in Canada and, at less than seven years of age, was born after the country implemented its 1997 ruminant-to-ruminant feed ban. As a result, the USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) sent a technical team to Canada to investigate the circumstances of this latest infection, and to assess Canada's enforcement of the feed ban.

Summary of Bill:

The USDA is urged to delay reopening the border to Canadian cattle until the APHIS technical team completes a thorough investigation into the circumstances around the January 11, 2005 BSE case and evaluates Canadian enforcement of the feed ban.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.